

Catholic Family Center Social Case Workers Expertly Trained

On weekdays, the fifth floor of the Columbus Civic Center Building hums with activity. And if you never have had the occasion to seek service from the Catholic Family Center, perhaps you wonder just what it is that keeps the staff of this social agency busy from nine in the morning until five at night, and not infrequently until ever later hours. You no doubt think to yourself that some end product must be produced from all this visibly applied energy.

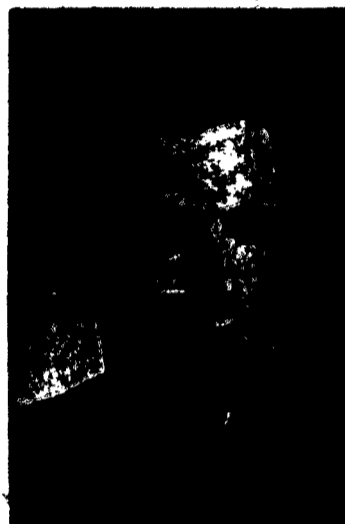
When you first come in, you cannot help but see the "red feather sign" displayed, denoting to one and all the fact that the Community Chest is the major sponsor for the work being done. A quick glance up and down the hall reveals many doors leading to the reception room, the private offices of the administrators, the stenographic rooms and of course, the offices of the case workers who make up the greater number of employees. As you find in any business office, telephones ring, typewriters beat out at a steady rhythm, elevators open and shut at intervals, bringing new people to the scene, and from behind closed doors, the sound of voices in conversation can be heard.

Clients Helped

Despite your observations, though, you still are not able to see just what is being accomplished, not as you would if you ventured into a hospital, a library, a doctor's or lawyer's office. In the latter settings, you can readily observe how a client or patient is being helped in social work, service is given in less tangible forms. Let us hope you are not one of those victims of archaic thinking who has the idea that all a social worker does is to welcome a client into his office, listen with a kindly ear to a pathetic story, offer a few sound words of wisdom, and pass a crisp dollar bill over the desk to alleviate the problem. Whether you are aware of it or not, social work, a comparatively new profession, is an up and coming big business and it takes more than a charitable heart and an extended hand to keep it going.

It is no news to the general public that social work is carried on in a variety of settings, both public and private. The CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER is a private agency, functioning under the auspices of the local Community Chest. The professional staff is made up of men and women college graduates who have had two additional years of specialized training for their particular jobs. During this period of graduate training, in preparation for the practice of social casework, these men and women make intensive studies and research into the science of human relations — why

Assistant Catholic Charities' Directors



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people think and act as they do, how they can be brought to new patterns of behavior, how dormant strengths can be developed and weaknesses minimized.

Caseworkers

Analyses are made, too, of the sociological, economical and environmental factors which pressure people's lives. Just as a doctor undergoes a period of internship, so the social caseworkers have to test and perfect their skills and techniques in working with individuals as well as family units. This is carried out under the close supervision of trained, experienced professional social workers. For the Catholic social caseworker, there is need for an even greater degree of preparation — a well-rounded understanding of Catholic philosophy to underlie every word, thought and action and to govern the ultimate goal of service given to clients. You might wonder at this point — who are these clients — what are their problems. When old age pensions, social security, public aid to the blind and the incapacitated, etc. did not exist, monetary assistance was the main focus. However, in this generation, social casework service has broadened its scope and new horizons have been reached to challenge even the most competent in the field.

Then too, as our way of living has changed, so too, have the accompanying problems: Urbanization, working women, wartime activities, housing problems — these are but a few of the influences which have given rise to new kinds of difficulties on the home scene. Perhaps even more important, tragically so, are the slipping moral standards and lax religious attitudes, typical of some of our people who are caught in the whirlpool of a fast-moving, money-mad, material-minded world.

Psychiatry Aids

On the brighter side, consider the advances of the science of psychiatry which has contributed so greatly to our understanding of how people can be helped, not only in times of severe mental stress, but also in working out the kinds of difficulties which worry and beset each one of us in everyday life.

Take, for example, the man with a domineering, irate wife. Her demands on her husband are many. She is never satisfied. She always finds flaws. She has no appreciation for



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his interests, his work, his friends. Unaided, this man might despair and seek solace in a separation or as seems to be the case with so many of our incompatible couples, he might procure a divorce. It's quicker that way. But the consequences are too numerous to count! With marital counseling, perhaps this couple might be helped, the marriage saved. As the situation has been presented, it would seem that the wife is the rigid, erring one. Certainly, she has adopted a warped personality. But at the same time, maybe the husband provoked her to such a stage by his insensitivity to her needs. Seldom, is one party entirely to blame. In this instance, direct psychiatric help might be indicated. The social worker would be in a position to determine the advisability of such a step.

In an average day, people from all walks of life seek out the services of the CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER. It is to their credit that these individuals turn to a social agency rather than to remain at home, proud and arrogant, yet at the same time sitting back passively as the lives of the members of their families waste away in desolate depression or, as is true in some situations, the waste results from a steady barrage of disagreements and outbursts. It takes a great deal of courage for people to tell outsiders of their failures, their shortcomings,



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ings, their personal difficulties. Social workers recognize this and attempt to relieve the pain of such an experience.

Child Problems

A wide variety of problems confronts social workers in their daily routine. There is the adolescent, living at home with rather elderly parents,

He is part of a new generation and is in constant conflict with his well-meaning, but puzzled parents. The social worker is faced with the repeated task of interpreting parental discipline to this boy, oftentimes giving guidance in vocational planning, and in some instances, acting as an intermediary on more crucial points.

Requests Studied

From some clients, the social workers receive requests for placement of children in a foster home or a group setting like the St. Joseph's Villa. Such requests have to be studied and weighed carefully. Some are turned down, but al-

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